

Remarks

In the application, claims 23 through 28 are pending. No claims currently stand allowed.

The Final Office Action dated March 22, 2004, has been carefully considered. The Final Office Action objects to claim 22 under 37 C.F.R. 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claim 1. Claims 1 through 9, 17 through 19, and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious in light of U.S. Patents 6,058,389 ("Chandra"), 6,094,694 ("Hickson"), and 6,282,565 ("Shaw").

In the cited art, message handling on senders and on receivers is performed by complicated databases (see especially Chandra, *passim*). Much of this complexity comes from efforts to guarantee that transactional messages are processed *exactly once* and *in a particular order* (Chandra, column 10, line 45, through column 11, line 9). The methods of the presently pending claims also guarantee that messages are processed exactly once, but these claims are simpler than the cited art because the claims give up the notion of guaranteeing a particular order of message processing (see the present specification, page 2, lines 8 through 13, and page 3, lines 17 through 18). However, in order to keep track of messages when they can come in any order, the presently pending claims add an expiration time to each message. A scavenger thread running on each of the receiver and the sender keeps message handling up to date by deleting messages upon their expiration.

This scavenger thread present in all pending independent claims is not necessary in the complex database systems taught by the cited art and, thus, that art neither anticipates nor renders obvious the scavenging clean-up method of the pending claims. Indeed, the cited art, through its discussion of the complexities of its message-handling databases, can be thought to teach away from this simple feature. Applicants respectfully request, therefore, that the rejections based on this cited art be withdrawn.

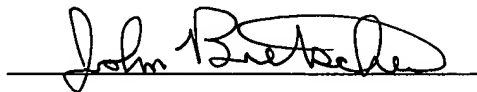
Conclusion

The application is considered in good and proper form for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a

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telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersign attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Bretscher", is written over a horizontal line.

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